Environmental structure at Chilka lake

373. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that environmental structure at Chilka lake in Orissa is dwindling;

(b) whether as a result, number of migratory birds to this spot is falling day-by-day, as reported in the New Indian Express, Bhubaneswar of 28th October, 2002;

(c) whether increasing salinity in the lake is one of its reasons; and

(d) if so, steps taken by the Centre to help the State for development of environmental structure to attract tourism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) to (d) it is not true that environmental structure at Chilka lake in Orissa is dwindling. In fact, as per the studies conducted by Bombay Natural History Society during the year 2002, the salinity level in Chilka lake has been found to be 10 ppt (parts per trillion) which is a brackish condition and is good enough for healthy growth of macrophytes which serve as a feed for migratory birds. Though there is some decline in number of water birds in Chilka, it cannot be attributed to increased level of salinity. Study of Bombay Natural History Society reveals overall decline in bird population in several wetlands of the country which can be attributed to other reasons. Ministry of Environment & Forests is supporting Chilka lake restoration programme and it is observed that there is a marked improvement of water quality and growth of indicator species like Irrawady dolphin, sea grass and fish species in the lake area. These developments have improved eco-tourism in the region.

Clearance of Daljanalla Irrigation Project

374. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Orissa is a drought-prone State and agriculture is the main stay of the economy;

(b) whether State's irrigation project Daijanalla (Major Irrigation Project) MIP is pending with the centre for clearance;

(c) whether Government are also aware that on completion, it would provide irrigation facilities to a vast area and provide relief to the drought-hit farmers of the State; and

(d) if so, the present status of the case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. Therefore, considering the importance of the project, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, have already granted and issued forestry clearance for diversion of 55.52 ha. of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in respect of Baijhanalla Minor Irrigation Project in Gajapati district of Orissa on 16-9-1994 itself. Also, this Ministry have granted forestry clearance for diversion of another 24.227 ha. of forest land in respect of Baijhanalla Minor Irrigation Project (Part-II) in Gajapati district of Orissa on 06.07.1998.

Pruning of trees

375. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Supreme Court has recently issued directions in the matter of pruning of trees, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government have evolved any policy for pruning of trees while setting up of a corridor through dense forests by power grid corporation and NTPC and other PSUs in future;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) what prompted the Supreme Court to give such directions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV): (a) and (e) No Sir.